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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA PROTESTS JAMESTOWN CONFERENCE ON NORTH
CAUCASUS

REF: MOSCOW 4081

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Alice Wells.
Reasons 1.4 (b and d).

¶1. (C) Acting MFA North Americas Department Director Aleksandr Khudin requested a meeting with PolCouns to express GOR concern over the September 14 Jamestown Foundation conference in Washington on "The Future of the North Caucasus." Noting that Jamestown conferences on the North Caucasus had become a "bitter theme," Khudin said that the GOR was aware that organizers had again invited Mairbek Vachagayev, currently a Ph.D. candidate at a French university but also the former spokesman for separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov. The conference Jamestown organized in April "Saidullayev's Caucasian Front: Prospects for a the Next Nalchik" had been an insult (reftel), he said, and by again inviting Vachagaev, Jamestown was providing him with a forum to propagate views in support of terrorists.

¶2. (C) Khudin said Vachagaev had openly spoken of his connections to Maskhadov and Chechen terrorist Shamil Basayev, and the GOR had other evidence of his affiliations with them and his knowledge of terror acts that they planned. Citing Security Council resolutions 1267, 1373, and others, as well as the Glenn Eagles G8 Summit declaration, Khudin said the U.S. had international obligations to prevent incitement of terrorist acts and dissemination of terrorist information. Khudin, speaking unemotionally and directly, also noted that the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled in 1931 that incitement to violence was an exception to the protections of free speech in the U.S., and the GOR believed that there was a sufficient legal basis for the U.S. to stop the conference.

¶3. (C) Polcouns responded that while the title of the previous Jamestown conference was offensive to the GOR, the U.S. believed that discussions of terrorism and its spread in the North Caucasus and elsewhere was a legitimate topic of discussion and did not constitute incitement. She emphasized that Jamestown was a non-governmental organization, over which the USG did not exert control or policy direction. The U.S. opposed terrorism in Russia, and it had been working cooperatively and productively on counterterrorism with the GOR, including on issues related to Chechnya. If the GOR had specific information on Vachagaev, then it should share it through the appropriate channels. Polcouns noted that support for Chechen separatism did not in and of itself constitute proof of terrorist complicity.

¶4. (C) Polcouns urged the GOR to highlight the noteworthy accomplishments in bilateral CT cooperation, particularly against the backdrop of the CT Working Group currently convened in Washington. It was unfortunate that when the GOR protested the Jamestown Conference in April, some Russian government-owned media had portrayed the seminar as USG support for Chechen terrorists. To the contrary, the U.S.

wanted to be helpful in the North Caucasus, not just on counterterrorism, but in finding other ways to work with the GOR on bringing stability to the region. Polcouns pointed to US participation in an upcoming UN planning meeting on future international assistance in the North Caucasus.

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